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(54) Vehicle seat belt release mechanism cover

(57) The cover is easily fitted over or removed from a motor vehicle occupant seat belt release mechanism and restrict access by a child to the mechanism, thereby reducing the possibility of intentional or accidental release by the child.

The cover allows routine or rapid emergency access to the seat belt release mechanism.

As shown, fitting is achieved by bending back a flap 2, inserting seat belt through a slot into the cover and then fastening in the manner of a 'press stud' fitting to enclose upper body belt within the cover - cover is then slid down belt to cover release mechanism.

FIGURE 1

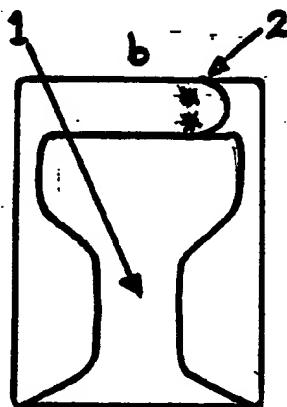
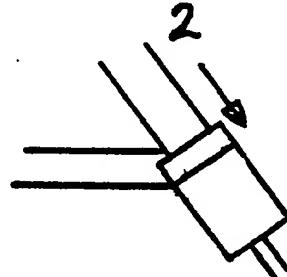
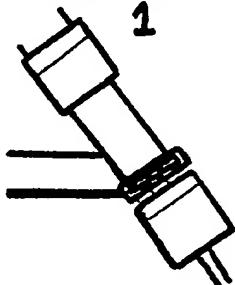


FIGURE 3



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FIGURE 1

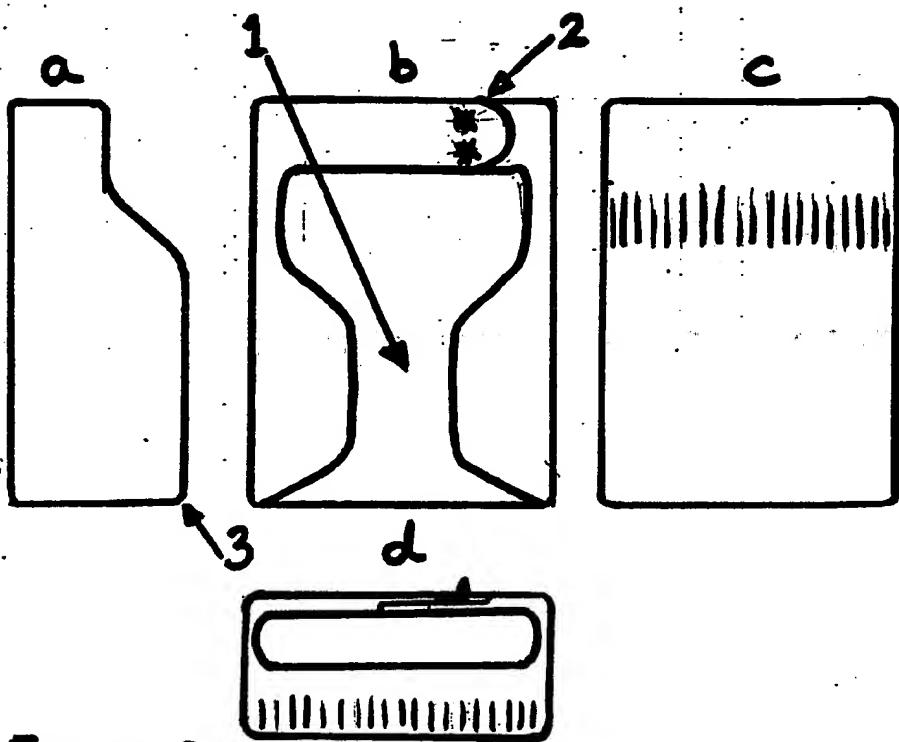


FIGURE 2

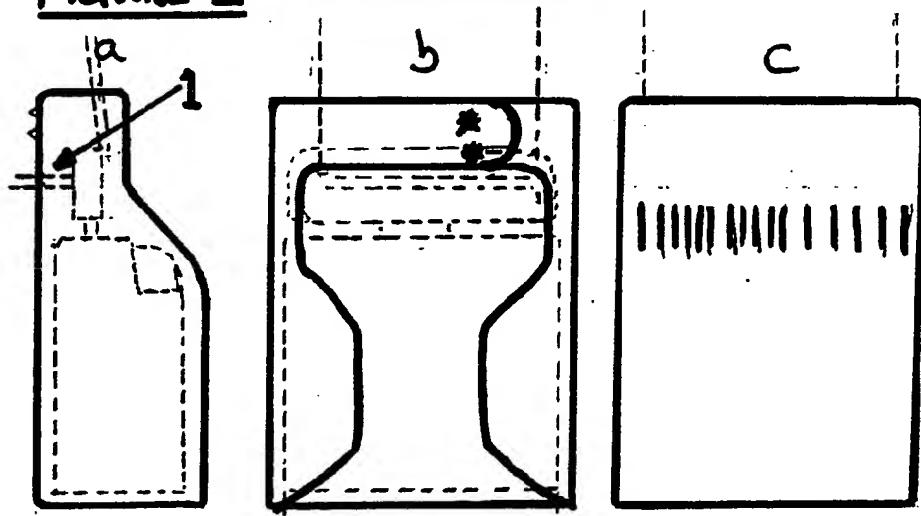
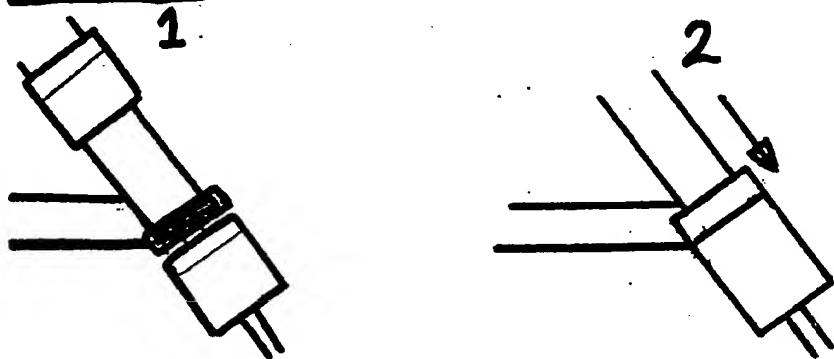


FIGURE 3



VEHICLE SEAT BELT RELEASE MECHANISM COVER

This invention relates to a cover restricting access to any standard seat belt release mechanism as fitted to motor vehicles.

Standard seat belt release mechanisms as fitted to standard seat belt occupant restraint systems in motor vehicles allow rapid and easy release of the seat belt restraint using relatively light pressure.

This essential safety feature of these mechanisms does however enable a young child to operate the release mechanism with ease at anytime they may choose to do so or by accident.

As adult occupants of a motor vehicle will normally be restrained in front seats and children in the rear of vehicles they cannot easily prevent or remedy this intentional/accidental release by a child while the vehicle is moving. In many road situations to stop the vehicle to redress this situation will be hazardous.

According to the present invention there is provided a cover of suitable material which can restrict the access to the seat belt release mechanism by a child and restrict accidental or intentional operation by the child. The construction of the cover allows, however, sufficient flexibility for an adult to operate the release mechanism routinely or rapidly when necessary.

A specific embodiment of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Figure 1 details side (a), rear (b), front (c) and top (d) views of the cover, prior to fitting to the seat belt restraint.

Figure 2 details side (a), rear (b) and front (c) views of the cover with dotted lines indicating approximate positions of the seat belt restraints and release mechanism within the body of the cover when in use.

Figure 3 is a general diagram showing the front view of the seat belt restraint indicating the cover both not in use (1) and in use (2).

The cover is designed to be suitable to be fitted to the 'upper body' part of a standard seat belt restraint both during and after manufacture.

The fitting of the cover to the upper body seat belt is achieved by bending back a 'flap', see figure 1 (2), inserting the seat belt into the cover through the slot, see figure 1 (1) and then fastening in the manner of a 'press stud' fitting. The upper body belt is then enclosed within the body of the cover.

The cover is designed to be operated by sliding it down the 'upper body' part of the seat belt restraint to cover the seat belt release mechanism after the seat belt straps have been fastened into the seat belt latching mechanism.

The 'lap' part of the seat belt restraint is then passed up through the slot in the rear body of the cover, figure 1 (1) to ensure both the 'upper body' and 'lap' restraint belts are in the correct configuration appropriate to the original specification of the seat belt restraint. The lap belt will therefore exit the cover at an angle as shown in figure 2 (1).

The cover can be removed reversing the actions described above or by firm levering of the cover away from the release mechanism allowing rapid operation of the mechanism when necessary. A firm pull at the bottom of the cover, see figure 1 (3), away from the seat belt release mechanism will allow the body of the release mechanism to pass through the slot at the rear of the cover. Continued firm pressure will cause the press-stud fastening to 'fail' and free access to the release mechanism is possible.

CLAIMS

1. A vehicle seat belt release mechanism cover which restricts child access to operation of seat belt release mechanisms by intention or accident while allowing easy release by an adult routinely or in an emergency situation.
2. A cover, as claimed in claim 1, which allows full specified operation of the seat belts when in use.
3. A cover, as claimed in claim 1 and 2, which can be easily removed or fitted from/to the seat belt installation as required both during and after manufacture of the vehicle.
4. A cover, as claimed in claims 1, 2 and 3, which fits most standard seat belt release mechanisms - whether the release button is at the top of the mechanism or in a lower position on the body of the release mechanism.